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ABSTRACT

Reunification of Germany, democratic changes in Eastern European countries, and new government policies of the Soviet Union will lead to the reduction of U.S. troops in West Germany. As a Department of Defense contractor providing associate degrees to soldiers in Europe, Central Texas College (CTC) will be severely affected by the troop reductions. CTC administrators have initiated actions that will slow down the possible removal of the institution from Europe. As a vocational college with a wide selection of specialized programs, CTC's courses can easily be related to specific military jobs, as now required by the armed services. A proposal is being drafted to offer a transition program that will assist service members who are leaving the Army. Training of child care personnel has been requested by military communities. With good planning and the ability to respond to changing requirements, CTC has not experienced any hardships as a result of the political changes in Europe. However, severe shortages in tuition assistance funds have made it more difficult for individual soldiers who wish to pursue undergraduate degrees. Tuition benefits for graduate students were discontinued in February 1990. Students are being encouraged to apply for Pell grants and Stafford loans and to take advantage of the GI Bill benefits. However, the number of students using financial aid will never be large enough to offset enrollment losses caused by shortage of tuition assistance money. (16-item bibliography) (CML)

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THE EFFECTS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGES IN
EASTERN EUROPE ON MILITARY EDUCATION

Societal Factors Affecting Education

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The events of the last six months in West Germany and Eastern Europe have not only changed the megapolitics of the world, but they have also affected the educational opportunities for thousands of servicemembers stationed in Europe. A very unique student population is presently threatened as a result of international and national actions. Not only will the changes in education have an immediate impact on individuals on active duty but, they will influence those students well beyond their service years. This report is intended to focus attention on the uncertain and perilous future of students in the military, who comprise an unknown student body in the higher education community.

A unified Germany has not existed as a political entity since 1949. As a result of the growing tensions among the four Allied Powers, Hitler's Third Reich, was divided into East and West Germany. On October 7, 1949 the German Democratic Republic was founded as an independent state in the Soviet zone of occupation, while France, Great Britain and the United States formulated the new Federal Republic of Germany. Increased tensions between the Soviets and the Western powers led to the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961. Over the past four decades the wall has symbolized the evil of communism and the oppression of liberty and the human spirit. A place of shame and valor alike, it stood as a monument to opposing ideologies that divided nations in the post World War II era.

On November 9, 1989, following several months of political unrest, the East German government allowed free passage between East and West Berlin for the first time in forty five years. The act symbolized an end of an era of tyranny and a beginning of a new age of cooperation and

better human understanding. The opening of the wall also represented the success of the democracy movements in the other Eastern European countries. Precipitated by the political changes in Poland prior to 1989, and aroused by the discontent of their own citizens, Hungary and Czechoslovakia led the former Soviet satellites into a new age of non-communist governments.

Time magazine (2 Apr 1990) attributes these political changes to the new movements of perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union under the unique leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. It must be remembered that the decision of the Soviet President not to intervene in the developments in Eastern Europe, is the single most important factor which contributed to the success of the revolution, according to Time (26 March 1990).

Almost immediately following the opening of the border between the East and the West Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl began promoting reunification of the two countries. His appeal was based on the premise that having been one people and one country, Germany was divided as a result of political circumstances and against the will of its citizens. This approach to re-unification, coupled with patriotism, sentimentality, prospects for economic expansion for West Germany, and the necessity to rescue East Germany from economic and political chaos, resulted in the mutual decision to unite both countries into one political entity in 1991.

Although a new united Germany represents the most desirable solution for both countries, there are many issues and problems that will face the governments and the citizens of both nations. Daily, the German

media reports concerns of East and West Germans alike regarding social and political issues which will affect the future of their country.

The President of East Germany, Lothar de Maiziere, in an interview with West German journalists, expressed some of the worries of his constituents regarding the unification. High unemployment among East Germans after the unification, as a result of modernization will be a problem. Loss of extensive social benefits East Germans are accustomed to, which will not continue after unification, is another major concern. East Germans are repeatedly expressing their worries over the prospect of being "bought" and "sold" by the rich "Westies."

The issues of unification are also causing considerable discussion among the West Germans who are mainly worried about financing the effort. According to the German media, 100 billion marks will be needed to up-grade the lagging East German industries and make them competitive in a free market economy. Citizens are also concerned about what unification will do to their present life-style and how it will effect the future of their children. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (4 Apr 1990) the question of preferential treatment of East German students West German universities is already causing resentment and reactions among West Germans. Special privileges regarding cost of housing for those coming from the East are also creating a conflict.

There are also many international problems which must be resolved prior to unification. Among them are: the new Germany's role in NATO, the role of the Soviet Union in East Germany, and the status of the foreign military forces stationed in both countries. The Soviet Union

insists on the neutrality of the new German state while the United States' position is that it should be a part of NATO. This topic and the reduction of Soviet and American forces on German soil are the main points being discussed by delegations in Vienna which are trying to work out the terms of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty.

It has become very clear that the upcoming unification of Germany, the democratic changes in Eastern European countries and the new government policies of the Soviet Union have created a more peaceful world which will not require the vigilance of the military. Stars and Stripes (17 Mar 1990) reports that the reduction of American troops in West Germany is a foregone conclusion. The only questions that remain to be answered are "when?" and "how many?"

Troop reductions will have far reaching consequences for the servicemembers, for the American society and for the West German communities where the troops are presently stationed. According to Stars and Stripes (27 May 1990) some representatives in Congress are in favor of a twenty-five percent Department of Defense cut over the next five years while others, like Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, are favoring more drastic measures resulting in fifty percent cuts over the same period. The Pentagon officials see no need for such hasty reductions. They have been very conservative in their prospects to re-shape the American military forces in the new changing world.

Presently, it seems likely that the American forces in West Germany will be reduced by approximately 80,000 troops over the next two years,

as proposed by President Bush and reported in Army (Apr 1990). The overall reductions proposed this month by the Secretary of the Army, Michael Stone, to the Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, will eliminate 185,000 troops as part of the 1992-1997 defense budget plan, reports Stars and Stripes (27 Apr 1990). This would reduce the overall Army troop level from the current fiscal year's 765,000 to about 580,000 by 1997.

As a Department of Defense contractor providing associate degrees to soldiers in Europe, and world-wide, Central Texas College will be severely affected by the troop reductions. The proposal to reduce the current force by 80,000 limiting the total force to 195,000 in Central Europe, will drastically affect enrollments. It appears that the reductions will be concentrated among the lower rank enlisted personnel with less than ten years of service. This group includes many potential Central Texas College students.

The college administrators are concerned about the new developments. However, they have already initiated some actions that will slow down the possible removal of the institution from Europe. Some of the measures are in direct response to the directives issued by General Crosbie Saint, Commander-in-Chief United States Army Europe (USAREUR).

In December 1989, General Saint issued a directive concerning the USAREUR Army Continuing Education Services. This agency, through which all colleges and universities offer services in the military, and which controls the government funding of higher education for servicemembers, is responsible for implementing the new policy.

Having been ordered by the Department of Defense to reduce the military education funds by \$1 million in Europe, General Saint set the educational priorities for the remainder of the year in USAREUR. The document specifies funding priorities for all educational programs. The policy also states that in order for a student to obtain tuition assistance money, the courses funded would have to be directly related to the military occupational specialty (MOS) and would be job-enhancing. This means that military policemen can be approved to take law enforcement courses while those who work as mechanics can take only automotive courses. Soldiers wishing to take courses not related to their jobs are to be denied tuition assistance. This directive is having devastating results on some colleges and universities offering liberal arts courses which cannot be readily attributed to specific military jobs.

In spite of these unfavorable circumstances, Central Texas College has retained its student population this year. As a vocational college with a wide selection of specialized programs, Central Texas College's courses can easily be related to specific military jobs. The new policy is having a favorable effect on the college because students from other institutions are being re-directed into programs offered by Central Texas College. Additionally, the college faculty and administrators have devised several new degree plans which will respond to the General's directive. For example, the new Non-Commissioned Officers' Professional Development Program consisting of courses in leadership, supervision, organization skills, and communication has been designed

especially for non-commissioned officers (NCO's). For those who are unable to complete the degree requirements, the new program has a 30-hour certificate. Other certificate and degree programs in diesel mechanics, welding, and military science have been proposed to home campus and are in the process of being approved.

The Central Texas College Europe Campus was the first institution to devise a document which showed the alignment of specific military jobs with college courses. Presently this reference is the only guide of its kind among the military institutions in Europe. The reference was welcomed by the education center counselors and commanders. The guide has been instrumental in helping students enroll in the Central Texas College programs.

The college staff is also drafting a proposal to offer a program which will assist servicemembers who are leaving the Army in the transition from military to civilian life. A similar program was last provided to the veterans at the conclusion of the Vietnam conflict. The college is fortunate to have several individuals, including the dean, who participated in that effort. Their expertise will be valuable in preparing a similar program for this generation of soldiers. This new effort represents an additional endeavor which is hoped to prolong the existence of the college in Europe.

Other civilian markets within the military structure are also being explored. For example, the child care centers have not been affected by the current budget cuts. On the contrary, the agency has been granted additional monies and raises for employees. Training of child care per-

sonnel is something the agency cannot accomplish internally. Several military communities have requested that Central Texas College conduct a training program based on its Child Development degree. The expansion into this new market will help offset some potential enrollment losses.

As a result of good planning and the ability to respond to changing requirements, the Central Texas College Eurpe Campus has not experienced any hardships as a result of new political changes in Europe. The past term has been the largest one ever in the history of the Europe Campus, and the prospects for expansion into different endeavors are excellent. With leadership which is innovative, aggressive and flexible, the college should be able to prolong its existance by diversifying its services. By remaining responsive to the changes in Europe, the college should be able to remain just as long as American forces do.

Unfortunately, the future of individual soldiers who wish to pursue undergraduate degrees does not look bright. Force reduction and the Department of Defense budget cuts have caused severe shortages in the tuition assistance funds. General Saint's policy, the USAREUR Army Continuing Education System (Dec 1989), specifies that tuition assistance funds are limited to 16 semester hours annually for each soldier. This new policy has limited many students in taking courses. The policy allows for students to enroll in additional courses beyond 16 hours, if they are willing to pay tuition and fees from their own pockets. This is usually not an option as most soldiers cannot afford the cost.

The graduate students who enjoyed the benefits of tuition assistance lost the benefit in February 1990. The result of this action has been

devastating for some graduate universities. Programs have been discontinued at several installations due to the lack of enrollments.

To assist students the education centers and the institutions have been trying to offset the shortage of funds by promoting alternate sources of funding. The emphasis these past two years has been on encouraging students to apply for Pell grants, Stafford Loans (GSL) and to take advantage of the GI Bill benefits. As a result of promotion campaigns by the education centers and the institutions in the past two years, the colleges and universities have experienced a considerable increase in students' use of benefits and grants. For example, Central Texas College had a one hundred fifty percent increase of students using VA benefits while the participation in PELL grants rose by thirty percent. The University of Maryland experienced a two hundred percent increase in VA and eighty percent increase in Pell. Unfortunately, the number of students using financial aid will never be large enough to offset enrollment losses caused by shortage of tuition assistance money.

AUSA News (Apr 1990) reports that another effect of force reduction is that the individual soldier's tour of duty will most likely be shortened. With less time to spend in Europe, many soldiers will not want to begin a college education knowing that they can only complete a small portion of the requirements. Commanders will also be less likely to give permission to soldiers to attend classes if they are in Europe for a short time and are needed in the unit. The military job and the accomplishment of the mission will be given more priority than ever. This is already being emphasized in Europe where General Saint has

directed commanders not to extend approval for tuition assistance to soldiers who have less than six months left in the command.

The new trend in military education is to channel students into programs which are related to their military jobs. There are obvious advantages to this approach for the Army. However, many students who are not career soldiers will miss an opportunity to get a college education which was intended to prepare them for civilian life. Students are expressing concern over this issue, especially since many of them came into the service to get an education. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin L. Powell in Army (Apr 1990) explains that in the new, changing army, education for the career soldier will be stressed and financed by the Department of Defense. Those who do not plan to remain in the military will find it increasingly more difficult to prepare themselves for civilian life while serving in the military. The effects of this new policy will undoubtedly be felt in the civilian sector which will have to absorb former servicemembers who will be without formal education or marketable skills.

It is clear that political events in Europe will continue to influence the changes in the policies of the Department of Defense. This will affect servicemembers world-wide. The colleges and universities working in the military will be effected as the education opportunities shrink with the size of the force. Thousands of potential students will be denied education benefits by the services, as a result of budget cuts. For the first time in decades, the military establishment will not be able to provide educational opportunities to thousands of potential students.

It is remarkable that in every issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education one can read stories about the problems facing students in South Africa, Poland, and Mexico, etc., however, not a word has been published in the "Chronicle" or any other professional education publication regarding the crisis of the American students in the Armed Forces. Perhaps when troop reductions and the closing of many military installations become a reality, and the servicemembers flood the civilian sector, the American public will take notice. Unfortunately, it will probably be too late for any productive, long-lasting solutions.

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